



# The Student Senate

Texas A&M University

S.R. 68-11

The Student Senate  
68th Session  
Texas A&M University

**Introduced By:** Senator Abby Hutton, Off Campus Caucus

**Sponsored By:** Senator Zach Price, On Campus Caucus

**Action Taken**

PASSED

**Certified By:**

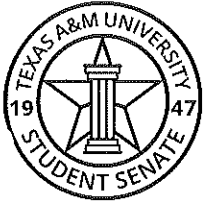
Aaron Mitchell  
Speaker of the Senate

*By unanimous consent*

## The Blue Water Navy Resolution

*"A resolution of The Texas A&M Student Senate urging congress to support H.R.969 - Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015 and Restore the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange exposure for United States Vietnam Veterans."*

- Whereas(1):** During the Vietnam War, the United States military sprayed approximately 22 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; these herbicides contained dioxin, which has since been identified as carcinogenic and has been linked to a number of serious and disabling illnesses affecting thousands of veterans; and,
- Whereas(2):** The United States Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving the Republic of Vietnam; the Act amended Title 38 of the United States Code to presumptively recognize as service-connected certain diseases among military personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; this presumption has provided access to appropriate disability compensation and medical care for Vietnam veterans diagnosed with such illnesses as Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, Parkinson's Disease, multiple myeloma, peripheral neuropathy AL Amyloidosis, respiratory cancers, soft tissue sarcomas, and other diseases yet to be identified; and,
- Whereas(3):** Pursuant to a 2002 directive, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs policy has denied the presumption of a service connection for herbicide-related illnesses to Vietnam veterans who cannot furnish written documentation that they had "boots on the ground" in-country, making it virtually impossible for countless United States Navy and Marine veterans to acquire VA benefits; moreover, personal who served on ships in the "Blue Water Navy" in Vietnamese territorial waters were, in fact, exposed to dangerous airborne and waterborne



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toxins which did not merely drift offshore but washed into streams and rivers draining into the South China Sea;

- Whereas(4):** Warships positioned off the Vietnamese shore routinely distilled seawater to obtain portable water, a 2002 Australian study found that the distillation process, rather than removing toxins, in fact concentrated dioxin in water used for drinking, cooking, and washing; this study was conducted by the Australian Department of Veteran Affairs after it found Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Navy had a higher rate of mortality from Agent Orange-associated diseases than did Vietnam veterans from other branches of the military; when the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied specific cancers among Vietnam veterans, it too, found a higher risk of certain cancers among United States Navy veterans;
- Whereas(5):** Herbicides containing TCDD/Dioxin did not discriminate between soldiers on the ground and sailors on ships offshore;
- Whereas(6):** More than 30 national veterans service organizations support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015; by not passing HR 969, a precedent could be set to selectively provide certain groups of veterans with injury-related medical care while denying other groups without providing scientific or medical reasoning;
- Whereas(7):** When the Agent Orange Act passed in 1991 with no dissenting votes, Congressional leaders stressed the importance of responding to the health concerns of Vietnam veterans and ending the bitterness and anxiety that had surrounded the issue of herbicide exposure, the federal government has also demonstrated its awareness of the hazards of Agent Orange exposure through its involvement in the identification, containment, and mitigation of dioxin “hot spots” in Vietnam; and
- Whereas(8):** The United States Congress should reaffirm the nation’s commitment to the well-being of all of its veterans and direct the United States Department of Veteran Affairs to administer the Agent Orange Act under the presumption that herbicide exposure in the Republic of Vietnam includes the country’s inland waterways, offshore waters, and airspace;
- Whereas(8):** Texas A&M University has a rich military history with more than 3,000 Aggies serving in the Vietnam War;

**Therefore**

**Let it be**

- Resolved(1):** That the Texas A&M Student Senate hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to the United States Veterans who served on the inland waterways, in the territorial waters, and in the airspace over the combat zone; and



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**Let it be**

**Further**

**Resolved(2):** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to:

The President of The United States

The President of the Senate of The United States Congress

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of The United States Congress

The members of the Texas delegation to Congress

The members of the United States House Subcommittee on Disability Assistance  
and Memorial Affairs

Peter Ablanczy- Shipmates Advocate, USS Ponchatoula Shipmates Association